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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9189

INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE

RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 000148

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR H

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OREP AMGT ASEC AFIN CG

SUBJECT: POST WELCOMES AVA ROGERS INCLUSION ON
STAFFDEL ROGERS

REF: (A) STATE 12062 (B) KINSHASA 132

¶1. Post welcomes the addition of Ava Rogers, House Foreign Affairs Committee, to Staffdel Sumilas (reftels) traveling to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from February 17 to February 21, 2009. Hotel reservations are confirmed at the Grand Hotel in KiQhasa for the nights of February 17-18, 2009. Rooms are \$250 per night, including breakfast, tax and service, and are within per diem. Contact information for the Grand Hotel is: Avenue Batatala, Kinshasa, DRC, tel: 243-81-811-0003; Fax: 243-81-555-3005. Rooms have been reserved at the Ihusi Hotel in Goma tel: 243-081-312-9560 for the nights of February 19-20, 2009, at a cost of \$100 per night, including tax but excluding breakfast. Embassy Kinshasa will meet and assist on arrival.

¶2. POINT OF CONTACT

USAID Program Officer Allyson Gardner will be the Control Officer for the visit and can be reached at:

Office Phone: 011-243-81-715-1067

VOIP: 202-216-6240

¶3. (SBU) VISA REQUIREMENTS

A valid Congolese visa is required of all American passport holders, whether diplomatic, official or tourist.

¶4. FISCAL DATA REQUIREMENTS

Fiscal data has been received.

¶5. ALL VISITS MUST COMMENCE IN KINSHASA

In accordance with post policy, all visits to the Democratic Republic of Congo which require country clearance are to commence in Kinshasa, the country's capital. Travel to other regions of the country including the Kivus, is to be undertaken from Kinshasa. Embassy Kinshasa will provide assistance with these travel arrangements. As travel in the Congo can be complicated, visitors should consult with their control officer early in the planning process.

¶6. AIRPORT ADVICE FOR ARRIVING PASSENGERS

Procedures at N'djili Airport are changing as airport officials try to strengthen security procedures. At this time, Embassy expeditors are no longer allowed in the Arrivals Hall and can provide assistance only after travelers pass through Immigration control.

After deplaning and entering the Arrivals Hall, travelers should proceed to the "Official VIP/Diplomat" line, with passports and

health certificates ready for presentation to the Immigration officials. After clearing Immigration, travelers will be met on the other side of the booth by the Embassy expeditor, holding a placard with the names of travelers being met. The expeditor will then collect baggage claim tickets and passports, collect the bags, and then take travelers outside to the Embassy vehicles. Once outside the terminal, local porters will carry your bags to the Embassy vehicle. Please be prepared to give the expeditor one USD per bag to pay the porters.

While at the airport, travelers are warned to not, repeat not, pay money or give their documents to anyone other than the Embassy expeditor. This also applies to individuals in uniform, who may offer their services. Be polite but do not accept their assistance.

17. CUSTOMS AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

If you will be carrying tools, heavy cases, or any electronic equipment other than personal devices, contact your control officer with specific information that can be passed to the expeditor for assistance with customs clearance.

18. SECURITY

Kinshasa is a critical threat crime post. Recent robberies indicate the targeting of Americans; all visitors should remain vigilant and cautious during their stay in Kinshasa. Because of political instability in parts of the country, all travel outside of Kinshasa must be approved by the RSO. Your control officer will make reservations for you at one of the hotels the Regional Security

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Office has approved for visitors. The RSO advises that you exercise caution in the areas around these hotels, and that you do not travel after nightfall unless accompanied by someone familiar with the security situation in Kinshasa. TDY personnel should not use any form of local transportation and should refrain from displaying/using camera as in public.

A recent scam involves individuals in civilian clothes claiming to be Congolese police/security officials who approach unsuspecting expatriates on the street and demand to see their passport or other identification documents. They try to convince the would-be victim to get in their unmarked vehicle and accompany them to the local police precinct. If you are on the street and approached by someone claiming to be a police or security official, identify yourself as a diplomat working at the U.S. Embassy, walk briskly away, and make sure to report the incident to the RSO or Post One as soon as you have access to a phone. Do not approach or get in their vehicle.

All incoming USG personnel are required to review and have in their possession prior to arrival a printed copy of the "Safe in Kinshasa Guide," Security Directive 09-01, and Post Yellow Pages. In addition they are also required to attend the first available RSO security in-briefing after their arrival; briefings are offered daily, Monday - Friday, at 10:00 a.m. The above documents can be obtained from the Kinshasa website or the control officer.

19. CURRENCY

The use of dollars in the DRC is legal and acceptable for most transactions. Travelers arriving in the DRC with more than USD 10,000 must fill out a currency declaration. Travelers departing the DRC are not allowed to take out more than USD 10,000 in cash.

Although there are some newly-installed ATM machines the RSO does not yet advocate their use. However, USG personnel are authorized USD and Franc Congolais accommodation exchange at the Embassy and/or USAID cashier; personal or travelers' checks are acceptable. Most personnel use Franc Congolais only for small purchases and tips.

American Express, Visa, Master Card, and Diner's Club are accepted in payment of bills at Kinshasa's two major hotels. However, very few other businesses in the Congo accept credit cards and their use outside of the major hotels is discouraged. Cashing traveler's

checks outside the Embassy is generally not advised because banks charge substantial fees for cashing them; traveler's checks are rarely accepted at all outside of Kinshasa.

¶10. MEDICAL

Access to the Embassy Health Unit is available for U.S. citizen, direct-hire USG employees and their eligible family members. If you have been or will be posted more than 60 days overseas in a calendar year (not necessarily consecutive), you must provide proof of a Department of State medical clearance from M/MED to qualify for access to the our Health Unit. Official visitors who are overseas less than 60 days in a calendar year are not required to have medical clearance and are authorized emergency, but not routine, use of the Health Unit.

Other official visitors may receive Health Unit services if they meet the following criteria: 1) an individual employment relationship with the USG, 2) a MED Washington clearance, and 3) a USG agency that guarantees payment for medical expenses and/or personal overseas health and medevac insurance. Visitors without Health Unit access will be referred to a local medical clinic, which provides all emergency and non-routine medical care for Embassy employees and family members.

MALARIA: Congo is a malaria-affected area. All travelers should consult with medical personnel and take malaria prophylactics as appropriate, before arriving in Kinshasa.

YELLOW FEVER: You must have a valid yellow fever vaccination and your yellow vaccination card when you arrive. You may be charged a fine of \$50-\$100 without proof of vaccination.

¶11. ACCESS TO CONTROLLED ACCESS AREAS

Each visitor to Kinshasa requiring unescorted access to controlled access areas (CAA) must arrange for their sponsoring agency or sending post to forward their security clearance to the RSO by telegram in advance of the visit. In accordance with regulations, a diplomatic passport or Department of State identification card is

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not sufficient to allow unescorted access to CAA'S. Kinshasa does not have the resources to escort visitors who arrive without proper advance security clearance.

¶12. You may visit the Embassy's Intranet website at <http://kinshasa.state.gov>. While still under construction, information is being added daily that you may find useful.

¶13. Have a good trip. Post looks forward to seeing you in Kinshasa.

GARVELINK